

R. L. Dione. God Drives a Flying Saucer. New York: Bantam Books. 1973. \$1.25.

Don't bother with this. It's largely drivel.

John Philip Cohane. The Key. New York: Crown Publishing Company. 1969. \$7.50.

There was a man who was struck by the similarity in Waikiki and Wichita. So he said (p. 180) "The only logical explanation I can think of is that the same names were taken in prehistoric times from one common source, and then, through lack of communication, and with people remembering less from generation to generation, they took on a wide assortment of local meanings that had nothing to do with the original ones. Being ancient, however, they were regarded with reverence and tampered with as little as possible." And he made it his life work to demonstrate, by means of the world-wide distribution of each of six key "names", that mankind in the person of far-ranging, Mediterranean-based Semites fanned out across the face of the earth from one common origin point.

Concerning the efforts of dedicated Atlantists to prove by random linguistic similarities the existence of Atlantis, L. Sprague de Camp (in Lost Continents, p. 101) snorted, "Such considerations [phonology, inflection, syntax] never bother the Atlantists, however, who seize upon any chance resemblance of names or other words to prove their case. By their methods I could, for instance, 'prove' that the Amerinds are the descendants of colonies from ancient Greece: I could derive the Croatan Indians from Crotona in Italy, the Cherokees from Kerkyra, the Chilkats from Chalkis, the Mandans from Mantinea, and the Aleuts from Eleusia. Why not?" The scorned derivations of the Atlantists involved whole words. Imagine how vastly the comparative process can be expanded, what unlikely relationships can be expounded, if instead of randomly similar words the exponent seizes upon randomly similar combinations of two or three letters—in English, regardless of the language source—comprising a portion of a name of anything. The proof? Built of moonbeams, bottomed on quicksand.

Suppose—just suppose, mind you—that before there was a language identifiable as English, there were two gods, or heroes, or whatever, whose names would be rendered in English as Haue and Oc. And suppose that the victors of a particularly bloody fracas triumphantly saluted Haue! Oc! Havoc!

This author's search for linguistic evidence of mankind's common source is havoc indeed. A process of indiscriminate removal, insertion, and change of vowels and consonants which the author unblushingly asserts are "equivalent" proves that Avebury (Hauebury) in England and the Incan Empire (Anahuac) share a common source. OCs, OGs, OCHs, HAWWAHs, ALAs, and AVAs are scattered through this book with never a reminder that in most instances these name-fragments represent some Englishman's effort to make familiar, if not intelligible, the gabble of a benighted heathen. [Just to indicate how helpful 'English' spellings can be, a pamphlet published in Boston in 1836 with a Seneca Amerind text is entitled "Diuhsawahgwah Gayádgháh. Gówahás Goyádgh. Sgágyadih dówáñandenyo". Ed.]

So we are conducted from China's Yalu to Florida's Yellow to Mexico's Yalalag to Turkey's Yalak to Australia's Yallock. Do they really prove worldwide distribution of the ancient Aya-Ala/Ala-Ala/Ala-Og-OC? We are reminded of William S. Baring-Gould's jocular proof that Nero Wolfe was sired by Sherlock Holmes: "...and surely it is no coincidence that his Christian name contains the er-o of Sherlock, and his surname the ol-e of Holmes."

We are not convinced that the worldwide distribution of OG, Hawwah, Ala, Mana, Tema, and Ash or sounds more or less like them prove the author's thesis, but we must admit that new worlds of speculation are opened by The Key.

J. Warner Mills III

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